

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/EE:ARTHOMPSON:DJW

APPROVED BY EUR/EE:JAARMITAGE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, PFOR, YO, US

SUBJECT: TOTH CASE

REF: STATE 207466

1. AT END OF AUGUST 28 MEETING (REFTEL) ARMITAGE TOOK UP LASZLO TOTH'S SITUATION WITH YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR GRANFIL, WHO WAS ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH CASE. ARMITAGE EMPHASIZED HE WAS NOT MAKING LEGAL ARGUMENT BUT RATHER WAS RAISING A POLITICAL POINT WITH GRANFIL ON QUESTION OF OUR CONSULAR ACCESS TO TOTH. FACT WAS THAT US OFFICIALS DID HAVE ACCESS TO DUAL NATIONALS IN MOST OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THOSE IN EASTERN EUROPE. SHOULD QUESTIONS BE RAISED REGARDING TOTH CASE, IT WOULD BE HARD FOR US TO EXPLAIN TO THE PUBLIC OR TO CONGRESS WHY SUCH ACCESS WAS NOT POSSIBLE IN YUGO-SLAVIA.

2. ARMITAGE ASKED GRANFIL TO EXAMINE CIRCUMSTANCES OF CASE HIMSELF TO SEE WHETHER HE FOUND PRESENT HANDLING OF SITUATION BY YUGOSLAV AUTHORITIES WAS IN FACT CONDUCTIVE TO OUR IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONS. ARMITAGE COMMENTED THAT HE

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BELIEVED WE WERE NOW AT SUCH A STAGE IN OUR RELATIONS THAT

WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO HEAD OFF SUCH UNFORTUNATE AND UN-NECESSARY IRRITANTS BEFORE THEY BECAME DAMAGING.

3. APART FROM MATTER OF ACCESS, ARMITAGE CONTINUED, WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO SEE MUCH IN THE WAY OF NATIONAL SECURITY INTEREST IN A SUGAR REFINERY. GRANFIL DID NOT DEFEND CHARGE OF ESPIONAGE; SIMPLY NOTED TOTH WAS "NOT VERY CLEVER" TO HAVE OBTAINED PHOTOS OF THE INSIDE OF THE PLANT AFTER HAVING BEEN DENIED RIGHT TO TAKE PICTURES HIMSELF.

4. GRANFIL SAID HE WOULD PASS ON THIS CONVERSATION TO BELGRADE AND WOULD TAKE PERSONAL INTEREST IN CASE. HE WAS PARTICULARLY SORRY ABOUT CASE, SINCE IT AROSE IN HIS OWN REGION (VOJVODINA). ROBINSON

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